

phantasies, simply confirms him in his inner dread and may tend to bring about a fixation at one of the more primitive levels of libidinal development.

To illustrate: If the child of six or seven months who begins to bite the breast sharply is met by sharp "biting" smacks, his fears of talion punishment receive strong confirmation, and the biting may become compulsive as a result. If he is left to scream indefinitely until he reaches the point of exhaustion, his idea of a terrible world in which he is deserted and lost and attacked, because he has wished to attack, becomes fixed and settled. If his bed-wetting at the age of two or three is dealt with by severe whippings and reprimands, a similar reinforcement of his phantastic dreads is brought about, and he will need to go on wetting all the more in order to prove that he can do so and live. Those mothers who have recourse to frequent whippings at an early age, on the plea that the child "does not understand anything else", are building up within the child's mind a picture of themselves as really harsh, cruel mothers, corresponding to the child's worst phantasies.¹ The earlier the age, the more

¹ "I wonder if you would advise me with regard to my little girl of three years. For the last six months she has been most frightfully naughty and I am absolutely ashamed of the way she behaves. She smacks me and bites me. I smack her back because I want her to know what it is like for she does the same to other children—takes all the toys away from them and when they take anything she smacks them and pushes them down. She has a lot of little friends to tea, but I am stopping it as it makes me so miserable. She cries for nothing at all and won't play by herself at all and is most frightfully impatient. She has plenty of toys and goes for a walk every afternoon from 2.30 until 4.30. At times she is most affectionate and loving, but the grizzling is terrible."

"I should be so much obliged if you could tell me your reason for saying one should never smack a child. I have one small son aged thirteen months, and am most anxious to bring him up

in the best possible way and to do what is right. However, I find excellent results from two short slaps, but am worried to see how you are. When D. will refuse to use his ' pot' and I know by the time which has elapsed since he last did so that he must want it, I give him two slaps in the proper place and he stops kicking and screaming and at once obliges. Also, at times he will refuse to take his lunch, even though it may be one of which he is extremely fond. He turns round in his chair and looks over the back and the only way I can make him take it is by slapping his hand, and he will then sit round and eat it up with apparent relish. He very seldom cries when he is smacked and this will last a long time, and I have merely to say, David, do you want a smack ? ' and he eats properly. I don't see in what other way you can possibly teach so young a child. It's different when they are older and one can reason with them. In the same way, when he will throw